

My Name is Kristi Vitelli and I live at 9 Martin Terrace, Glastonbury, Connecticut.

My testimony today is in favor of Extended Producer Responsibility Bill SB 115 and HB 5139

I support SB 115 and HB 5139 for many reasons, but the most important of which is that we need to stop putting items into landfills that can be recycled. Less than 50% of packaging is currently recycled. This is especially concerning given that fact that there was a significant change in consumer habits during the pandemic when so many items were purchased online and shipped to homes and businesses. The result is a lot more packaging materials being added to the waste stream.

Town governments and their residents are paying to dispose of the packaging that does not get recycled. The cost of disposing of waste is going to increase for the towns, like Glastonbury, who have been sending waste to the MIRA plant once it closes. Thus, it is even more important to reduce what is put into the waste stream since it will need to be hauled out of state to be landfilled. In addition to adding more waste to landfills, the carbon footprint created by shipping this waste out of state is immense. We need to put less into the waste stream to landfills and recycling is the way to accomplish this goal. Areas which have adopted Extended Producer Responsibility have seen huge cost savings in waste disposal.

By requiring EPR for packaging it will encourage producers to both reduce the amount of packaging and use recycled materials for packaging instead of virgin materials. Studies have shown that the majority of Green House Gas emissions reductions associated with recycling result from recycled material displacing the use of virgin materials in manufacturing of products.

I also support adding EPR for tires in HB 5139. There are so many uses for recycled tires. Plus, they are heavy to transport to landfills and cause toxic chemical leaching when placed in landfills.

I did not specifically find a bill in favor of EPR for gas canisters, but think they should be included too since it is extremely dangerous to have them in the waste stream.